

ERIE-NIAGARA REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP
INSTITUTE FOR LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND REGIONAL GROWTH
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Memorandum

To: Co-Chairs Clyde Burmaster & Barry Weinstein, MD

From: Government Affairs Subcommittee Chair Peter McMahon

Re: April & May 2004 meetings

Date: May 21, 2004

The Erie-Niagara Regional Partnership's Government Affairs Subcommittee met April 21 and May 5, 2004 at the UB Institute for Local Governance and Regional Growth. Present for the April meeting were subcommittee members McMahon, Allen, Ellis, Meal, Weinstein, and Sheffer. Present for the May meeting were subcommittee members McMahon, Ellis, Meal, Weinstein, and Sheffer.

Electronic Permitting:

As previously reported, the pilot e-permitting site stands ready to go live as soon as permission is granted from Erie County to do so. The original plan was to transfer the site to the county's servers at the completion of the pilot, however issues with the installation of Erie County's new computer systems have put a hold on this plan. Other considerations discussed dealt with manpower, and with the transparency of the site being hosted on erie.gov. The UB Institute for Local Governance and Regional Growth was requested to submit a proposal for a six-month extension for housing the site and taking it live. Additional municipalities such as Grand Island, Aurora, and Lewiston have expressed interest in joining, and a presentation was made to municipalities in Wyoming County. It is felt that additional municipalities will express interest once they see the live site. **The Government Affairs Subcommittee requests approval for ENRP to request Erie County to take whatever steps are necessary to bring electronic permitting live, and for ENRP to request that Niagara County offer an appropriate financial contribution to bring e-permitting live in that county. Further, the Government Affairs Subcommittee requests approval to offer its services to help facilitate the aforesaid.**

Brownfields Conference:

With the recent changes in eligibility and funding in the New York State Cleanup Act, the subcommittee feels it would be useful to hold an informational forum for local officials. Some suggestions are to coordinate this with any other efforts underway on the issue, and to use specific properties as examples at the forum. The goal is to provide useful information without overwhelming participants with paperwork. **The Government Affairs Subcommittee requests concept approval to develop an informational conference for local officials on recent changes in brownfields legislation.**

Regional Economic Development Database:

The subcommittee is interested in furthering the awareness and use of the Regional Economic Development Database (REDD) amongst local officials. To that end, encouraging municipalities to submit shovel ready or near shovel ready sites for inclusion on the REDD and Site Finder would be a positive. Responses to their submissions with suggested next steps for the properties could be included in the process as well. To effectuate this, **the Government Affairs Subcommittee requests approval to organize an educational forum in conjunction with the Buffalo Niagara Enterprise on the REDD for local officials, with a follow-up letter soliciting sites from the municipalities to be considered for inclusion on the REDD and Site Finder.**

Homeland Security:

The subcommittee held a discussion on homeland security, calling it one of most important issues on fronts such as public safety, regional cooperation, and funding. Much has been reported in the press about this issue, especially on the funding front. The subcommittee believes this to be a worthwhile topic for discussion at our general meeting, and has identified Erie County Deputy County Executive Carl Calabrese as the primary contact. **The Government Affairs Subcommittee requests that ENRP invite Erie County Deputy County Executive Carl Calabrese to speak at our July 30 general meeting on the topic of homeland security.**

Other Topics:

Other topics discussed include zoning language, the Lancaster police merger, pooled health insurance, and upcoming regionalism events.